

# **Annual Report**

## **Missouri Advisory Council on Pain and Symptom Management**

**February 1, 2006**

Pain is the oldest medical problem and the most universal physical affliction of mankind. It is one of the most common reasons for patients to seek medical attention and one of the most prevalent medical complaints in the United States. Effective pain and symptom management presents a significant challenge for individuals, physicians and other health care professionals. Clinical experience has demonstrated that adequate pain and symptom management leads to enhanced functioning and increased quality of life, while uncontrolled pain contributes to disability and despair. Although medical science has learned a great deal about pain and symptom management in the last twenty years, this knowledge has not been integrated into practice.

To assist in addressing these issues, the Missouri Advisory Council on Pain and Symptom Management (Council) was established by the Missouri legislature in 2003 (RSMo 192.350-355). The Council is comprised of nineteen members including health care providers, policy makers, and a pain patient. Among other mandates, the Council was directed to create an annual report to various governmental officials.

The Council convened six times in 2005. Major activities and accomplishments include:

- Review and compilation of recognized guidelines and standards regarding the treatment of acute and chronic pain.
- Web page dedicated to pain and symptom management established at the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) web site: <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/PainManagement/>. Guidelines, standards, statutes and regulations are posted on that site.
- Dialogue initiated and continues with the leadership of the boards of health professions. Topics of discussion include methods for integrating training and education on pain and symptom management, palliative care and alternative therapies into programs and continuing education offerings. The boards and Council are exploring the development of a joint statement on pain and symptom management.
- Inclusion of a question regarding the presence and impact of uncontrolled pain in the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. Participants are asked if during the past 30 days, for about how many days did pain make it hard for them to perform usual activities, such as self-care, work or recreation. Analysis of the responses will be available in 2006.

- Collaboration with partners to identify and address pain and symptom management needs specific to Missourians. The Council is supporting a grant proposal submitted by the Missouri Pain Initiative to develop a statewide collaborative strategic planning initiative. This initiative will enable us to move forward to achieving mutual goals in pain and symptom management and maximize use of resources.

The Council recognizes the profound consequences of uncontrolled pain, including both personal costs and financial burden imposed on society. In order to improve the lives of Missourians, assessment and management of pain must be addressed. The Council will continue to evaluate current barriers to pain care and make additional recommendations to enable health care providers to enhance the quality of care and quality of life for Missourians.

#### References

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